GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1042
ANSWERED ON:24.02.2003
PROTECTION OF INTERESTS OF FISHERMEN FROM WTO PROVISIONS
ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY;SHYAMA SINGH

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have conducted any study on the impact of WTO provision on fish industry in the country in order to protect the interest of fishermen;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether an International Conference on Fisheries was held at Mumbai recently in which WTO provisions vis-Ã -vis fish industry was discussed;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the manner in which the Union Government propose to safeguard the interests of fishermen from the WTO provisions?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV)

(a)&(b): Government has instituted a study by an independent organization for analyzing the implications on the domestic fisheries sector of the impact of strengthened disciplines on fisheries subsidies and to make a balanced assessment of the extent to which this could ensure sustainable and responsible fishing.

(c)&(d): During the Sixth Indian Fisheries Forum and International Seminar on Fisheries Policies held at Central Institute of Fisheries Education, Mumbai during 17-20 December 2002 the issues relating to impact of WTO, Intellectual Property Rights, new economic policies, the challenges and opportunities in fisheries sector etc. were discussed.

(e): Although the quantitative restrictions on several items of fish and fishery products have been removed the quantity of fish imported is reported to be insignificant and some amount of fish imported is being processed for re-export with value addition. Also the basic customs duty for fish and fishery products is fairly high and offer a significant level of protection to the domestic producers of fish. The Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary measures that are in force help in protecting the health of indigenous fish population as well as consumers through risk analysis. A clear position on the issue of negotiations on fisheries subsidies shall emerge after wide range of consultations with stake holders upon perusal of the study report referred to in parts `(a)` and `(b)` of the question.